[English]

Telephone System

4091. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the telephone system is constantly deteriorating due to repeatedly breaking down of crossbar telephone exchange;

(b) whether the Government propose to convert these Exchanges into E-90-B electronic Exchanges; and

(c) if so, the time by which these Exchanges are likely to be converted into Electronic Exchanges?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. There is a programme to scrap all crossbar exchange and replace them by digital electronic exchanges, during the 9th Plan period.

MEMU Trains

4092. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether MEMU trains started between Ahmedabad and Vadodara were previously proposed to be started between Gandhinagar and Vadodara;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to review the said decision; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Metre Gauge Rail Line in Purnea Division

4093. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN alias PAPPU YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total length in Kilometre of metre gauge rail lines in Purnea Division;

(b) the steps being taken for gauge conversion of these important metre gauge rail lines connecting India and Nepal; and

(c) the time by which the pending work of Jogbani rail line connecting Bihar and Nepal is likely to be converted into broad gauge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Purnea is not a Railway division. Also, information regarding railway route kilometrage is maintained only Railway Zone-wise and State-wise and not civil Division or region-wise.

(b) and (c). A survey for gauge conversion of Katihar - Jagbani line has been taken up. Further consideration of the project will be possible once the survey report becomes available.

[English]

Labour Market Reforms

4094. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :
SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem under the captioned "Need for Labour Market Reforms" appearing in the daily 'Tribune' dated September 2, 1996;

(b) if so, whether after the adoption of the policy of liberalisation in the country during the Eighth Five Year Plan the labourer class is facing new challenges and problems;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of the labourers under threat ever since the setting up of highly technical and capital intensive industries?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d). Restructuring of industries is a natural phenomenon associated with industrial growth. The impact of the new Industrial Policy has been studied by the Government in regard to technological upgradation and modernisation of units as a consequences of liberalisation. Government established the National Renewal Fund in 1992 to provide a social safety net for the workers affected by industrial restructuring, technology upgradation and modernisation of industry. It *inter alia* envisages assistance, counselling, retraining and re-employment of workers who may become redundant.

Resignation by Doctors

4095. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of regular posts of doctors lying vacant alongwith the doctors working on contract basis in Western Railway;

(b) whether the Government are aware that the doctors appointed on regular basis in Railways are being harassed and forced to quit jobs;

(c) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(d) the measures being taken by the Government to prevent the exodus of doctors?